

# BOSTON TEA PARTY





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# **BOSTON TEA PARTY**

**The Boston Tea Party was an American political and mercantile protest by the Sons of Liberty in Boston, Massachusetts, on December 16, 1773. The target was the Tea Act of May 10, 1773, which allowed the British East India Company to sell tea from China in American colonies without paying taxes apart from those imposed by the Townshend Acts. The Sons of Liberty strongly opposed the taxes in the Townshend Act as a violation of their rights. Protesters, some disguised as American Indians, destroyed an entire shipment of tea sent by the East India Company. The demonstrators boarded the ships and threw the chests of tea into the Boston Harbor. The British government considered the protest an act of treason and responded harshly. The episode escalated into the American Revolution, becoming an iconic event of American history. Since then other political protests such as the Tea Party movement have referred to themselves as historical successors to the Boston protest of 1773.**

**The Tea Party was the culmination of a resistance movement throughout British America against the Tea Act, a tax passed by the British Parliament in 1773. Colonists objected to the Tea Act believing it violated their rights as Englishmen to "no taxation without representation", that is, to be taxed only by their own elected representatives and not by a parliament in which they were not represented. In addition, the well-connected East India Company had been granted competitive advantages over colonial tea importers, who resented the move and feared additional infringement on their business. Protesters had prevented the unloading of tea in three other colonies, but in Boston, embattled Royal Governor Thomas Hutchinson refused to allow the tea to be returned to Great Britain.**



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The Boston Tea Party was a significant event in the growth of the American Revolution. Parliament responded in 1774 with the Intolerable Acts, or Coercive Acts, which, among other provisions, ended local self-government in Massachusetts and closed Boston's commerce. Colonists up and down the Thirteen Colonies in turn responded to the Intolerable Acts with additional acts of protest, and by convening the First Continental Congress, which petitioned the British monarch for repeal of the acts and coordinated colonial resistance to them. The crisis escalated, and the American Revolutionary War began near Boston in 1775.



**JOHN TRUMBULL'S PAINTING, DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, DEPICTING THE FIVE-MAN DRAFTING COMMITTEE OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE PRESENTING THEIR WORK TO THE CONGRESS. THE PAINTING CAN BE FOUND ON THE BACK OF THE U.S. \$2 BILL. THE ORIGINAL HANGS IN THE US CAPITOL ROTUNDA.**

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**The Tea Act 1773 (13 Geo 3 c 44) was an Act of the Parliament of Great Britain. The principal objective was to reduce the massive amount of tea held by the financially troubled British East India Company in its London warehouses and to help the struggling company survive. A related objective was to undercut the price of illegal tea, smuggled into Britain's North American colonies. This was supposed to convince the colonists to purchase Company tea on which the Townshend duties were paid, thus implicitly agreeing to accept Parliament's right of taxation. Smuggled tea was a large issue for Britain and the East India Company, since approximately 86% of all the tea in America at the time was smuggled Dutch tea.**

The Act granted the Company the right to directly ship its tea to North America and the right to the duty-free export of tea from Britain, although the tax imposed by the Townshend Acts and collected in the colonies remained in force. It received the royal assent on May 10, 1773. Colonists in the Thirteen Colonies recognized the implications of the Act's provisions, and a coalition of merchants, smugglers, and artisans similar to that which had opposed the Stamp Act 1765 mobilized opposition to the delivery and distribution of the tea. The company's authorised consignees were harassed, and in many colonies, successful efforts were made to prevent the tea from being landed. In Boston, this resistance culminated in the Boston Tea Party on December 16, 1773, when colonists (some disguised as Native Americans, since they identified themselves as “Americans” and no longer considered themselves British subjects)[citation needed] boarded tea ships anchored in the harbour and dumped their tea cargo overboard.

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The Boston Tea Party arose from two issues confronting the British Empire in 1765: the financial problems of the British East India Company; and an ongoing dispute about the extent of Parliament's authority, if any, over the British American colonies without seating any elected representation. The North Ministry's attempt to resolve these issues produced a showdown that would eventually result in revolution.

## **TEA TRADE TO 1767**

As Europeans developed a taste for tea in the 17th century, rival companies were formed to import the product from China.[5] In England, Parliament gave the East India Company a monopoly on the importation of tea in 1698.[6] When tea became popular in the British colonies, Parliament sought to eliminate foreign competition by passing an act in 1721 that required colonists to import their tea only from Great Britain. The East India Company did not export tea to the colonies; by law, the company was required to sell its tea wholesale at auctions in England. British firms bought this tea and exported it to the colonies, where they resold it to merchants in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston. Until 1767, the East India Company paid an ad valorem tax of about 25% on tea that it imported into Great Britain. Parliament laid additional taxes on tea sold for consumption in Britain. These high taxes, combined with the fact that tea imported into the Dutch Republic was not taxed by the Dutch government, meant that Britons and British Americans could buy smuggled Dutch tea at much cheaper prices.



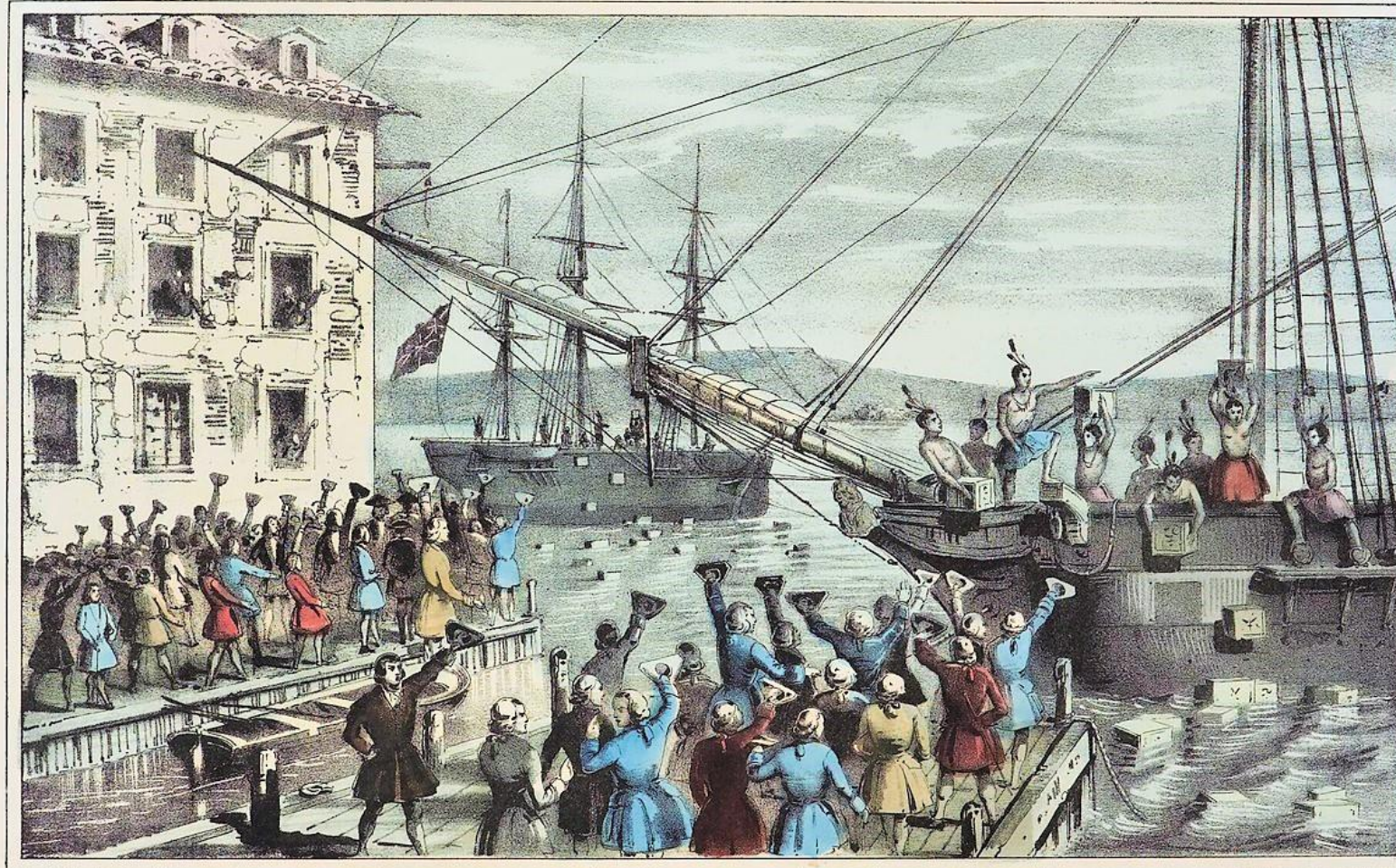
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In 1767, to help the East India Company compete with smuggled Dutch tea, Parliament passed the Indemnity Act, which lowered the tax on tea consumed in Great Britain and gave the East India Company a refund of the 25% duty on tea that was re-exported to the colonies. To help offset this loss of government revenue, Parliament also passed the Townshend Revenue Act of 1767, which levied new taxes, including one on tea, in the colonies. Instead of solving the smuggling problem, however, the Townshend duties renewed a controversy about Parliament's right to tax the colonies. Parliament finally responded to the protests by repealing the Townshend taxes in 1770, except for the tea duty, which Prime Minister Lord North kept to assert "the right of taxing the Americans". This partial repeal of the taxes was enough to bring an end to the non-importation movement by October 1770. From 1771 to 1773, British tea was once again imported into the colonies in significant amounts, with merchants paying the Townshend duty of three pence per pound in weight of tea. Boston was the largest colonial importer of legal tea; smugglers still dominated the market in New York and Philadelphia.





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THIS ICONIC 1846 LITHOGRAPH BY NATHANIEL CURRIER WAS ENTITLED THE DESTRUCTION OF TEA AT BOSTON HARBOR; THE PHRASE "BOSTON TEA PARTY" HAD NOT YET BECOME STANDARD. CONTRARY TO CURRIER'S DEPICTION, FEW OF THE MEN DUMPING THE TEA WERE ACTUALLY DISGUISED AS NATIVE AMERICANS.

THE DESTRUCTION OF TEA AT BOSTON HARBOR.



# BOSTON TEA PARTY



**THE BOSTON TEA  
PARTY MUSEUM  
IN FORT POINT  
CHANNEL**



# BOSTON TEA PARTY



**REPLICA OF  
THE BEAVER  
IN BOSTON**



# BOSTON TEA PARTY



HERE FORMERLY STOOD  
GRIFFINS WHARF,

AT WHICH LAY MOORED ON DEC. 16, 1773, THREE BRITISH SHIPS WITH CARGOES OF TEA,  
TO DEFEAT KING GEORGE'S TRIVIAL BUT TYRANNICAL TAX OF THREE PENCE A POUND,  
ABOUT NINETY CITIZENS OF BOSTON, PARTLY DISGUISED AS INDIANS, BOARDED THE SHIPS,  
THREW THE CARGOES, THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY TWO CHESTS IN ALL, INTO THE SEA,  
AND MADE THE WORLD RING WITH THE PATRIOTIC EXPLOIT OF THE

BOSTON TEA PARTY

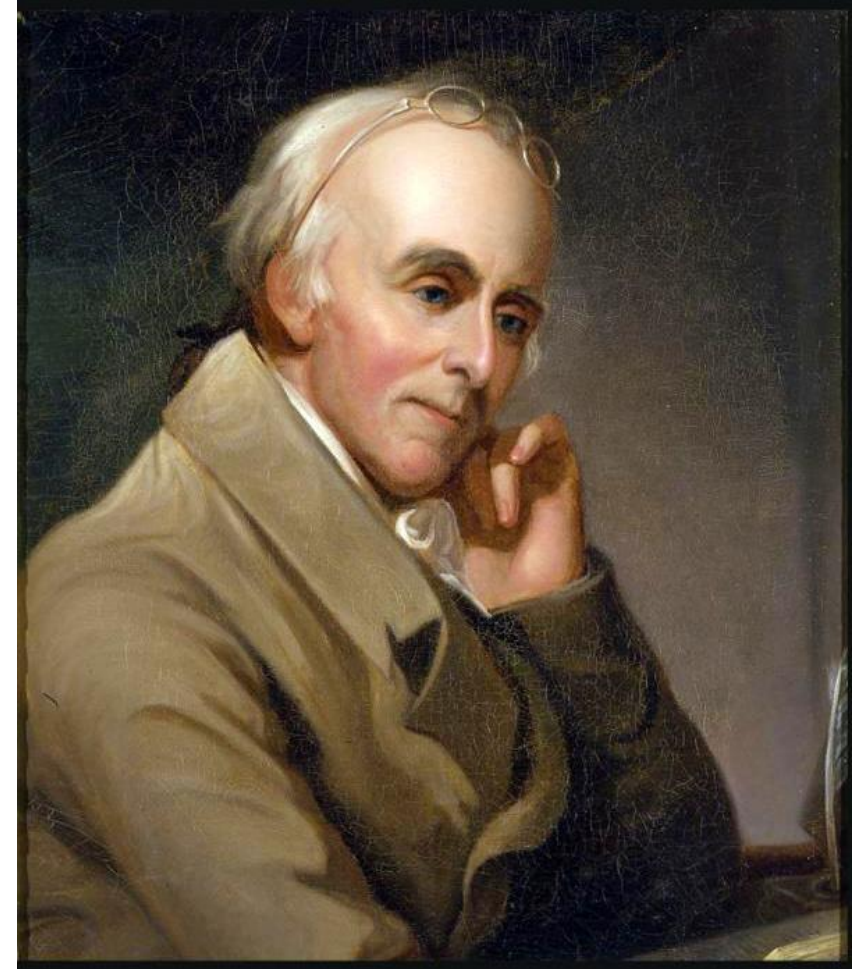


"NO! NE'ER WAS MINGLED SUCH A DRAUGHT  
IN PALACE, HALL, OR ARBOR,  
AS FREEMEN BREWED AND TYRANTS QUAFFED  
THAT NIGHT IN BOSTON HARBOR"



# BOSTON TEA PARTY

IN NEW YORK, PHILADELPHIA, AND CHARLESTON, PROTESTERS COMPELLED THE TEA CONSIGNEES TO RESIGN. IN CHARLESTON, THE CONSIGNEES HAD BEEN FORCED TO RESIGN BY EARLY DECEMBER, AND THE UNCLAIMED TEA WAS SEIZED BY CUSTOMS OFFICIALS. THERE WERE MASS PROTEST MEETINGS IN PHILADELPHIA. BENJAMIN RUSH URGED HIS FELLOW COUNTRYMEN TO OPPOSE THE LANDING OF THE TEA, BECAUSE THE CARGO CONTAINED "THE SEEDS OF SLAVERY". BY EARLY DECEMBER, THE PHILADELPHIA CONSIGNEES HAD RESIGNED AND THE TEA SHIP RETURNED TO ENGLAND WITH ITS CARGO FOLLOWING A CONFRONTATION WITH THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN. THE TEA SHIP BOUND FOR NEW YORK CITY WAS DELAYED BY BAD WEATHER; BY THE TIME IT ARRIVED, THE CONSIGNEES HAD RESIGNED, AND THE SHIP RETURNED TO ENGLAND WITH THE TEA.



**BENJAMIN RUSH**



# BOSTON TEA PARTY





# BOSTON TEA PARTY

